

Marines storm the



Sgt. Arsenio R. Cortez and ConMar Staff

Recruiting Station, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

FT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Marines, for the first time, stormed Fort Lauderdale beach with an amphibious assault in front of two million spectators during the 6th Annual Air and Sea Show held May 6 and 7.

The Air and Sea Show, a salute to the U.S. military, is the largest spectator event in the world, according to Elaine Fitzgerald, Director of Media Relations for the show.

"It is the largest air show of its kind in the country," she said.

Two F/A-18 Hornets rumbled through the bright, blue skies as pyrotechnics blew up on the beach, catching everyone's attention. The Marines had started their invasion.

A pair of UH-1N Huey helicopters and two AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopters hovered low to secure the beach. The USS Nassau, about a quarter of a mile from land, made its pass, spewing a trail of Amphibious Assault Vehicles into the water.

The AAVs crept across the sea and slowly became

visible to the spectators who gave them a standing ovation. The people who are more accustomed to being invaded by college students each spring welcomed the Marines' landing.

The sequence showcased skills and equipment honed by Marines through hard work and long hours of training.

The Marine Corps Harrier was the only aircraft to zoom in at the speed of sound then hovered just offshore to assess the crowd watching on the beach.

This year, in addition to the Harrier demo, the Marine Corps conducted an amphibious assault and had Marines rush the beachfront property.

Marines from 8th Tank/TOW Company, Ft Lauderdale, Fla., and 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, Tampa, Fla., attacked the beach in a

mini-MAGTF style demonstration, bringing a barrage of amphibious assault vehicles onto the beach all at once. There were F/A-18s, AH-1Ws, UH-1Ns, and AAVs with embarked Marines from aboard the USS Nassau.

The enhanced Marine presence this year received significant positive comments, including extensive media

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beaches of Florida



Photos courtesy of Sun-Sentinel and Miami Herald staff photographers, John L. White and Jose Iglesias

coverage, such as pictures and an accompanying story of the Marine landing on the front page of both the Miami Herald and the Sun Sentinel, the two largest daily newspapers in the South Florida area.

"The Marine Corps presence during the show, with the amphibious landing and the chin-up challenge, definitely generated a positive exposure to the community," said Master Sgt. Leo D. Fraraccio, operations chief for Recruiting Station Ft. Lauderdale.

"It was a Total Force recruiting effort," said Maj. Peter F. Owen.

According to Fraraccio, RS Ft. Lauderdale received over 450 qualified, interested names from the event, which totaled one third of the RS' goal for the entire month.

"The Marine Corps provided the greatest level of support for the 2000 Air and Sea Show since 1994," said Fraraccio.

Far Left: Lance Cpls. G. R. Burr, T. M. Peterson, C. A. Gutierrez and W. S. Baker of 8th Tank/Tow Co., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., provided a demonstration of a mini-MAGTF at the Air and Sea Show. The Air and Sea Show, a salute to the U. S. military, is the largest spectator event in the world. **Above:** Marines from Co. B, 4th AAV Bn., Jacksonville, Fla., displayed an amphibious assault attack to an audience of over three million viewers.